

Congresswoman Matsui Votes to Reauthorize Child Nutrition Programs

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Sacramento Education Leaders Applaud Bill Which Provides Children with Healthier School Meals

WASHINGTON, DC – Today, Congresswoman Doris Matsui (CA-05) joined her colleagues in passing S. 3307, the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act. This legislation reauthorizes and improves federal child nutrition programs, and includes the first increase in federal funding for school lunch programs in thirty years. The bill's key provisions include improving the nutritional quality of school meals for 31 million American children, requiring the Department of Agriculture to develop science-based nutrition standards for all foods sold on school grounds, and connecting more children with healthy produce from local farms. The legislation also increases the number of eligible children enrolled in school meal programs by an additional 115,000 students nationally and expands the after-school supper program for at-risk children.

“Thanks to this legislation, fewer children will go hungry and the meals children do receive at school will be more nutritious,” said Congresswoman Matsui. “Our nation faces a looming health crisis with nearly one-third of American children classified as overweight or obese, and nearly a quarter of children lacking access to meals each day. This legislation will help bring our nation back into balance, where we are feeding those who go hungry and making enormous progress in making sure the food all children receive at school fits their nutritional needs.”

This legislation will have a enormous impact on Sacramento schools, by expanding both the number of kids who are eligible for reduced or free lunches, as well as providing balanced meals. As Sacramento education leaders have said, healthier meals will also increase student performance and achievement.

“According to California Department of Education statistics, nearly 123,000 children in Sacramento County rely on the free and reduced lunch program in our public schools. The Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act would be an extraordinary

investment in child nutrition programs and would help set thousands of disadvantaged children in our community on a path toward healthy eating and healthy living," said David W. Gordon, Sacramento County Superintendent of Schools.

"As a public school district, we have a responsibility to not only educate our kids, but to provide a healthy learning environment for them as well," said Jonathan P. Raymond, Superintendent of Sacramento City Unified School District. "For too many of our kids, the meals they eat at our schools may be the best meal they get all day. We cannot expect our students to be effective in the classroom if we don't provide them with a healthy environment and nutritional foods. In our district, we have formed a Healthy Foods Task Force to dive into this critical work."

The Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act is fully paid for. Unfortunately, the funding comes in part by cutting funding levels in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), formerly known as the food stamp program. Congresswoman Matsui has sent a letter to President Obama asking that any cuts to SNAP be restored to the program before they take effect in 2013.

"The enactment of the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act is an important step forward for America's children and will enable all children and youth to lead healthier, happier lives," added Matsui. "And I will continue to work with President Obama and his Administration to see to it that the SNAP program's funding is restored, and that this bill is fully paid for in a way that does not compromise our commitment to hungry children and families."

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